

Court invalidated a central provision of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, making it easier for local authorities to tweak election rules in a manner that disenfranchises particular groups of people.

Under the Obama administration, the Justice Department aggressively fought these efforts. Lawsuits filed by civil rights advocates and the Justice Department led a federal appeals court in 2013 to strike down a North Carolina voter ID law that justices concluded had been designed to target African-American voters with “surgical precision.” Litigation in a similar Texas case is now on hold, pending guidance from the new attorney general.

If Mr. Trump’s attorney general nominee, Senator Jeff Sessions, is confirmed, the Justice Department will be likely to all but abandon enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. Mr. Sessions once called it a “piece of intrusive legislation.” That would allow state and national lawmakers to impose even tighter voting requirements, harming minorities, the young and the elderly, who tend to vote Democratic.

Republicans may see these measures as a means of staying in power in the face of demographic changes. They should be ashamed of undermining the integrity of our system of government by trying to strip away a right Americans have fought for and died to secure.

Ms. LEE. If the President were serious about protecting access to the ballot, he would join members of the Congressional Black Caucus in our call for the restoration of the Voting Rights Act.

Since it was gutted in 2013, millions of minority voters have been prevented from casting their votes. Last year alone, hundreds of thousands of minority voters were disenfranchised before and on election day.

Instead of lodging investigations based on alternative facts, President Trump should be investigating the widespread efforts to disenfranchise voters, including the use of outdated voting machines, the mishandling of provisional ballots, the improper purging of voting rolls, and the widely reporting incidents of intimidation and misinformation at the polls.

These are the truth threats to our democracy. If these threats are not enough to occupy President Trump’s attention, he should turn to the widespread evidence of Russian interference in our elections. The facts are available and in need of bipartisan investigation, but President Trump has no interest in evaluating facts. He would rather focus on falsehoods.

But the President’s attacks on our democracy aren’t restricted to alternative facts. This weekend we witnessed the erosion of another American value: our proud tradition as a refuge for immigrants of every religion. The President issued an executive order banning immigrants and refugees from the United States on the basis of religion.

This outrageous executive order to shut people out from several Muslim nations runs counter to our fundamental values that we cherish as Americans. It is morally reprehensible and will only make the United States

less safe. The order has done nothing but create chaos and fear among refugees and immigrants who have been admitted or have been approved to come to the United States.

This Nation is, has been, and always will be a nation of immigrants and refugees. This is who we are. We don’t turn our back to those in need. And certainly, we do not do so on the basis of religion.

This is a watershed moment for our country, a moment that brings into question our moral character. Thousands of Americans took to the streets to protest the Muslim ban. Really? This is what the resistance must look like.

Tonight, many of us joined our colleagues on the steps of the Supreme Court to demand a reversal of this hateful policy. We will continue to fight every attempt to erode our values to appease ideology and radical special interests.

Our new bill, Statue of Liberty Values Act, known as the SOLVE Act, will reverse President Trump’s Muslim ban executive order and ensure that funds or fees shall not be used to implement the order. I hope everyone signs on to Congresswoman LOFGREN’s bill. The President’s order harms our families, our economy, and our national security.

Once again, this is not who we are as a nation. We are better than. We must wake up and fight because the future of our democracy is at stake.

My district is a district of immigrants. People are very afraid. We are a sanctuary district. What is taking place now is totally un-American.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, within just days of assuming office, President Donald Trump has made a number of alarmingly fictitious claims about anything from the alleged failures of the Affordable Care Act to the skyrocketing murder rate throughout the United States. President Trump has even felt it was necessary to misrepresent the number of attendees at his inauguration. However, among his most egregious “alternative facts” that he has presented to the American people is the idea that there is widespread voter fraud across the country, which is undermining the electoral process in the United States. This is unequivocally false.

In fact, numerous reports, court findings, and official government investigations over the years have pointed to the fact that voter fraud is, in reality, extremely rare. In 2016, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which ultimately found the Texas photo ID law to be racially discriminatory, noted in its findings that there were only two convictions for in-person voter impersonation fraud out of 20 million votes cast in Texas within the last decade. In a separate case ruled in 2014, a special investigations unit for the State of Texas was found to only have identified a single conviction and one guilty plea of in-person

voter impersonation in any election in the State of Texas between 2002 and 2014. Nationally, countless studies—including one conducted by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office—have failed to identify any evidence of widespread voter fraud. The story is the same in states all across the country.

Yet, somehow President Trump and Republicans in Congress have arrived at a separate conclusion and are using this false notion to promote regressive voter laws that seek to suppress minority voting rights all across the country. These laws are an example of your classic “solution in search of a problem,” albeit with a more sinister objective to suppress liberal leaning voters and deny select groups of voters their fundamental right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I have worked tirelessly throughout our careers to ensure that every American has equal access to the polls regardless of race, income, location, or background. We will not stop at making sure that every American preserves their right to vote, even in the face of a Republican-controlled Congress and Administration. The right to vote is a fundamental pillar of our democracy, and it is counter to our principles that our nation had defended for centuries to now try and erode that right for millions of Americans. I, and countless other Americans, unequivocally reject these efforts and will forever stand united against them.

#### FAST START UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we are off to a fast start this year under the Trump administration. It is difficult, apparently, for some of the press to keep up with how quickly some of the things are going.

I did want to make clear something that has been completely muddled by the mainstream media. They keep wondering why they continue to lose out to news channels like FOX News and why some of the conservative news sources online do so well compared to the left-wing sources. It is because a majority of people really are seeking truth, really are seeking answers.

I realize that is not true for everywhere. The areas that Hillary Clinton won are basically relegated to the edges, the fringes of the country: around the coasts and southern valley, Chicago, Detroit, and some of those areas. It is really the fringe party.

After someone—anyone with the least amount of even a small modicum of fairness—looks at the actual executive order that Donald Trump issued, it seems eminently reasonable. When looking at it, for example, compared to orders signed by a President named Obama, a President named Carter—I couldn’t find any CNN, MSNBC, or anything like CNBC, and I could have missed that somebody did break through all the misrepresentations of those networks and actually point out,

because sometimes I am going by and I don't have the sound on and I will be reading the subtext, but you would think that someone in one of those networks would make a big deal out of the fact that Muslims were not banned under the Trump executive order. Yet people all over the world and all over this country are still under the mistaken impression they can trust certain networks. They still haven't figured out that they can't.

They see that, my gosh, the President has banned Muslims. I actually have the executive order here because, just as I read ObamaCare before I voted against it, I have read the President's executive order. I made highlights in bold on some things. I saw that there is no reference—not one—to Muslims, to Islam. It is just not there. So it is a total misrepresentation.

Now, to try to cover for the way the executive order news is being spun, some of them, to try to grasp back just a small portion of something resembling fairness, would say the words "Muslim-majority country banned," try to bring it back so they can work in the word "Muslim" when it wasn't about religion at all. It is about the safety of the United States, the people we are sworn to protect, the Constitution that we raise our right hand and we swear to protect. We just took that oath earlier this month, and already it is forgotten.

The refugee program that President Trump has paused is the same one that ISIS terrorists have repeatedly vowed that they are infiltrating, and they are intending to use it to kill Americans. The President is acting temporarily and prudently to give his administration and this Congress the time it needs to properly evaluate the refugee program and reform it to ensure that we help legitimate refugees and ensure the safety, as much as is possible, of the American people.

When an FBI Director warns that they have no information from a country with which to compare identity information that refugees have or present or even orally convey, then I would think at some point we would take that information seriously from the sworn testimony.

Now, I realize that the past administration has played fast and loose when you keep telling the American people and the Members of Congress that the attack in Benghazi was all about a video, and you even try to cover that by encouraging the producer of the video to be arrested and put in jail to help with this misrepresentation of the truth. Then I guess, under those circumstances, you don't take testimony from the prior administration Cabinet members all that seriously because you know that they have been out there and misrepresented the truth before.

I don't know if Klein's book about, I think it was, the blood feud between the Obamas and the Clintons was right, but there had to be a reason that Hillary Clinton did not come out on the

Sunday shows after Benghazi and make this claim that was adverse to what she emailed her daughter and what she emailed to the President of Libya, saying that it was an attack. She didn't mention a video because it wasn't about a video. She knew that. I realize that, between the concussion, the problems, she may not remember that, but she knew it at the time.

According to that book, she called and talked to former President Bill Clinton; and she was encouraged not to go public and say it was about a video, that, in essence, that was indefensible. Nobody in their right mind was going to believe that, so she couldn't be out there.

There were thoughts being entertained of maybe resigning rather than going out and trying to defend that story, but, gee, they realized that if she was going to run for President in 2016 and she resigned right before the election in 2012, it would have likely cost President Obama a second term, and then Democrats would not be very kind and forgiving even though that would have been a stance based on truth and honor. If it cost the Presidency in 2016, it was just not something that could be done.

□ 2030

Apparently, according to the book and his sources that he says are close friends of the people involved, they decided the best way was not to resign and cost the President the reelection in 2012, but refuse under all circumstances to go on the Sunday shows and try to tell America six times that the attack at Benghazi was not planned; it was just instantaneous that arose from a protest over the video, but just don't go make that representation. Make that clear to the administration you are not going to do that, and then let the chips fall where they may. Because we haven't been able to figure out outside that representation in the book, why in the world did Susan Rice come out and say all that?

That should have been Hillary Clinton's role. So he provides the excuse or the reasoning. So Susan Rice goes out and over and over on Sunday shows, it was all about a video.

Well, I know from my days as a judge hearing of incidents where someone perhaps in a company that was not being honestly run would keep somebody in the dark so they could go out and make certain representations. The person really didn't want to know what the real truth was so they could come out and say with a clear conscience, here is what happened, and that wasn't it. So it may well be Susan Rice just did not know that her statements were lies. And if she didn't know, then they are not lies; they are just falsehoods she didn't know were false.

We don't know, but it is an interesting representation. And it still brings us back to the fact that in certain countries in the world, we don't have adequate information to check in-

dividuals coming in against. No matter how much the credibility of the FBI Director may have been harmed last summer when he came out and made a totally political move of outlining that Hillary Clinton basically committed a crime, but no reasonable prosecutor would pursue this, that is my interpretation of what he said basically, and those who have prosecuted—I have prosecuted. You know, there are a lot of prosecutors who would take that. But he made the statement. So I figured that was pretty political.

Despite that, when he says, you know, look, we had some information from some of these countries we got from their governments so that when we see their passport, we see some of this information, we could say, all right, we can check it against their government's records: What do you have on this person?

But we had heard from Syria, for example, that they had actually taken over facilities that could print official passports. So they could print a totally fictitious passport because they have the means to do it. They have captured that. Not only do we not have a cooperating government, but we have no information. We don't have fingerprints off IEDs like we did from Iraq, and most of the time we had cooperation so we could compare this information. But we had nothing in some of these countries that could give us the assurance that the leaders of radical Islamist groups were not doing exactly what they said they were, and that is infiltrating the refugees with people who were going to come in and kill Americans. They said they were doing that in Europe. At some point we need to take these things seriously.

I am thrilled to death to have a President—fortunately it is nice being thrilled to death instead of being beaten or knifed or hit with a truck. But I am thrilled to have a President who is taking seriously the things that the Obama administration found should be taken seriously. Let's be clear, no one is being discriminated against in the President's executive order based on religion. Christians, Jews, Muslims, any religious group, agnostics, atheists from the countries designated for a pause—it is not a ban; it is a pause so we can look better at what we need to do.

I am thrilled to be joined by one of our sharpest new freshmen.

Mr. GAETZ. I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding. I similarly thank him for many nights coming to this floor and defending values that are not only uniquely American, but which are unmistakably conservative. I appreciate him for being the fire keeper on this floor for those values and those principles for constituents in his district and in mine and all throughout this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my fellow northwest Floridians, brave airmen who serve at Eglin Air Force Base and Duke Field and skilled

aviators who train out at NAS Pensacola and Whiting Field and some of the planet Earth's most hardened and successful warriors in the 7th Special Forces Group and those who also deploy out of Hurlburt Field in northwest Florida. They are the best among us and they often inspire the best within us as a consequence of their patriotic service.

So when I encounter them at town-hall meetings or in church or at grocery stores, I often ask: How do you do it? How do you leave your family, your home, your community, risk your life, your health to go to places that many Americans couldn't point to on a map and to fight against an enemy who is evil and vicious and determined and increasingly equipped?

And almost to a man and woman, they tell me: We fight them over there so that we don't have to feel the consequences over here in America.

It is that spirit that I join in supporting and honoring in my full-throated and unequivocal support of President Trump's most recent executive order so that we are not devaluing the service of my constituents by risking the lives and the health and security of Americans here in this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I wish so much that President Trump's executive order were unnecessary. I wish that we lived in a world that was more stable and secure, where America could welcome with open arms anyone from anywhere for whatever reason at whatever cost. But the reality is that American taxpayers can't pay for everything, and American families cannot shoulder the risks of insecurity for the consequences of terrible foreign policy decisions that have been made over the last 8 years.

Maybe if the former President hadn't withdrawn from the Middle East, these regions would be more secure. Maybe if our policies hadn't so destabilized north Africa that we had failed state after failed state functioning as a caldron of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, this order would not have been necessary. But, alas, it is necessary.

I think it is important to distinguish between the realities of this executive order and the hysteria that has been created by the media. Some would believe, if they were to look only at media reports, that this was a ban on all Muslims who would seek to come to this country.

Let me affirm: our war, our conflict is not with the Muslim faith. As a matter of fact, this consequence, this conflict we are engaged in is all about the future of that faith and religion, and I am hopeful as a Christian that we are able to forge a lasting peace among all people on Earth. The reality is that there are more than 50 countries that are majority Muslim, and most of those countries will see no impact as a consequence of this most recent executive order. But there are seven countries—I guess it is perhaps a bit gen-

erous to call them countries, Mr. Speaker, because they are failed states that function to do very little other than to breed more terror and discontent and anti-Americanism. But from those seven countries, the President has taken the position that we ought to take a closer look, we ought to have a belt-and-suspenders approach to the security of American families. Of the more than 325,000 people who have recently come to the United States from foreign countries since the President's most recent executive order, about 100 have been kept for additional screening, more thorough review, and a more thoughtful approach.

So as I stand here with the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Speaker, know that I am in full support of President Trump's most recent order. When I go back to northwest Florida and I look into the eyes of the warfighters, the airmen, the sailors, and the patriots, I will know that in this House there were those who were willing to stand with them, honor their service and sacrifice, and do everything possible to put America first and to keep Americans safe.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, as I told my friend from Florida, I am honored anytime he comes to the floor to speak because he knows what he is talking about. When I was a judge back in Texas, a young prosecutor also shared his first name, and he is now the DA. He is as sincere and intelligent. Anyway, it is just an honor to serve with Mr. GAETZ. I wondered if he might yield for a question.

The Attorney General—I am sorry, this is the acting Attorney General because the Senate is dragging its feet on one of its own, JEFF SESSIONS, but this came out today in The Hill that "Acting Attorney General Sally Yates sent a letter Monday ordering the Justice Department not to defend President Trump's executive order . . ." even though it is an order that basically has been done by the Obama administration—except President Obama had done it one country that is included in the seven for 6 months instead of 3—and also by President Carter. I don't think he was a Republican. Anyway, these things have been done before, and the letter says we are not going to defend it.

This story from Lydia Wheeler today says: "Yates's"—the acting Attorney General—"decision suggests she does not want to put the credibility of the Justice Department behind the order. . . ."

I wanted to ask the gentleman from Florida, does he have concerns that, if the Justice Department were to defend this executive order, it would hurt the credibility of the Justice Department when acting under its Democratic leadership?

Mr. GAETZ. I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding. I believe his question highlights an increasing problem that we have had for the last 8 years that I hope we will cure, and that

is the politicization of the important work that the executive branch ought to be doing on behalf of the American people.

The Justice Department should not be Republican or Democrat. It should stand up for the rights of all Americans, the laws that are enacted by this Congress, and the orders that are issued by the President. We shouldn't have circumstances where we have to wonder whether or not the people who are tasked to uphold the law, as the gentleman from Texas did as a jurist and did in a very colored legal career—we shouldn't have to worry about that. But, in fact, for the last 8 years, that has been the problem. That is perhaps one of the reasons why the Senate should act with due haste in confirming JEFF SESSIONS as the Attorney General, so we go back to a system that is governed by the rule of law, not the rule of popular opinion or politics or one particular ideology.

More specifically to the gentleman from Texas' question, I believe that what undermines the Justice Department is this partisan tilt, are these lenses through which many of President Obama's appointees evaluate the great questions that impact the security of Americans.

The gentleman from Texas correctly points out that what President Trump has done is hardly unprecedented. In 1979, President Carter, hardly one that is held out among conservatives as a great standard-bearer on foreign affairs and a strong America, was one who recognized that there were unique challenges in a unique period of time from those who may be coming to the United States from Iran, and he took action.

□ 2045

Similarly, in 2011, President Obama was concerned that, during an act of conflict with Iraq, there may be circumstances where people would come from Iraq to do harm to Americans on American soil, and so he took action. I guess the difference with President Trump is that he is willing to take action immediately, and that we are not going to have a Presidency with a bunch of handwringing and bedwetting over the questions that impact the safety of Americans and the dignity of this country and its borders.

President Obama was unwilling to heed the counsel of those in his own administration who indicated that there were insufficient vetting procedures in place previously. And so it strikes me as only reasonable, Mr. Speaker, that a new President coming in, having heard that there were inadequate screening procedures, not from a Trump appointee but from an appointee of President Obama, that we would take a finite period of time, 90 days, and we would analyze what would be the appropriate protocols, screening procedures, and vetting algorithms that we would use to ensure that America's interests were placed first.

I am glad we have a President who puts this country first; I am glad we have a President who does not view himself as a citizen of the world more than he views himself as a citizen of this country; and I am glad that he takes that responsibility seriously.

And to answer the gentleman's question, I would say that we ought to have a Justice Department that is led by those who will follow the rule of law, who will defend the rights of Americans, and who will stand up for the security of this country.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. Great points. And I wish I were as articulate.

I have been critical of the majority leader in the Senate, Senator MCCONNELL, but this story is from CNS News. Majority Leader MCCONNELL says: "Well, I think it's a good idea to tighten the vetting process."

And he went on to say: "I don't want to criticize them"—the Trump administration—"for improving vetting."

And I applaud the majority leader for not running for the hills when all of the media does their typical thing and just goes freaking out. But, we found this story goes also, I think, to illustrate the point Mr. GAETZ was making. This is from Daniel Horowitz's article today. It turns out that 17 sitting Democrats in the House and Senate voted to ban visas from some Muslim countries and that law still exists today. Of course, this was back in 2002. And back at that time, you had some quite conservative Democrats in the House and Senate, people like Senator Ted Kennedy and Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN, you know, real bulwarks of conservatism, who voted to ban visas from these type countries, of the Muslim majority countries, as CNN would like to call them. Gee, names like CARDIN, MARKEY, MENENDEZ, MURRAY, NELSON of Florida, REED of Rhode Island, SANDERS of Vermont. Wow, there is another conservative, SANDERS of Vermont. SCHUMER, another strong hearted conservative. STABENOW, WYDEN, DURBIN, FEINSTEIN, LEAHY, and UDALL.

So it kind of begs the question: If this is only a temporary ban from countries until we can ascertain better vetting, how much worse is it for these 73 sitting Democrats to have voted for a permanent ban? That is rather shocking.

And it is notable that President Obama, not exactly consistent with former President George W. Bush who went 8 years without coming out and making formal criticisms—well, President Obama has said he is very heartened by all of the anti-Trump protests. We even have Democrats here in the House who said: "... as we've heard before, the President fundamentally disagrees with the notion of discriminating against individuals because of their faith or religion." Because I know my friend here in the House would not misrepresent the truth. So it just shows, obviously, he hasn't read this executive order that makes very clear

it is not banning a religion or a faith, it is countries where we don't have enough information.

And I just find it interesting that we are standing on the side of 73 Democrats—MARKEY, BERNIE SANDERS, FEINSTEIN, people like that—who thought it was a good idea when they were closer to 9/11.

Mr. GAETZ. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOHMERT. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Texas yielding for a question.

Not long ago, we heard members of the Congressional Black Caucus take to this floor and make the argument that it was hypocritical and improper that in President Trump's order and in the follow-on execution of that order by the Department of Homeland Security that there would be some preference given to religious minorities in these predominantly Muslim countries, particularly Christians, who are often persecuted, harmed, or killed. In many circumstances in which the President has allowed for through exceptions to his order, there will be people from these seven countries allowed into the United States as a consequence of the persecution that they feel and that they endure as a consequence of their Christian faith.

And so my question to the gentleman from Texas is whether or not he shares the Congressional Black Caucus' view that it is improper to treat Christians who are being discriminated against in these predominantly Muslim countries differently and to give them the opportunity to immigrate to the United States of America and realize freedom in the absence of this terrible persecution that they feel?

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, my friend makes such a great point. I think the way this country has, in recent years, been so discriminatory as has been the United Nations against Christian refugees, I am afraid that this United States of America could be called to account for the slaughter of so many Christians who we could have helped. And as we know from the numbers, there are a lot of excuses by the U.N. as to why they are not helping an equal percentage of Christians to the percentage of makeup of those countries they are coming from. There have been all kinds of excuses.

But even our Secretary of State, under the last administration, John Kerry, admitted there was a genocide going on of Christians in the Middle East. Now, there is not a genocide going on of Muslims in these countries. There are Sunni versus Shia and vice versa, and there are clashes within the Islamic religion, but there is not a genocide of all Muslims in any of these countries. And yet there is clearly a genocide clear enough for John Kerry to note.

So one of the most heinous and outrageous answers that I have heard a

U.N. general secretary make was—well, I didn't hear it, I read—that the U.N. general secretary was asked about a year and a half or so ago, when he was in charge of the United Nations' refugee program, and this issue of the U.N. not helping the same percentage, in fact, just helping a fraction of the percentage of Christians who exist in these countries, his response was basically that it was important to leave these Christians in the areas where they are being killed because they have historical precedence in those areas.

So we are going to bring Muslims out, according to the U.N. general secretary, because they didn't have as much historical significance, whereas the Christians who are being wiped out—throats cut, heads cut off, crucified, women raped, and just the most heinous of crimes committed against individuals are taking place—our U.N. general secretary and, apparently under our past President, the State Department felt like it was important to leave Christians there in larger percentages than existed among the refugees of Muslim because, hey, they have been there a long while, so let's leave them there, which ultimately means they will all be slaughtered. It is quite distressing.

But here is a point made by George Rasley today in an article, "President Trump Stops Suicidal Immigration Policy . . .," where he points out that:

"Had President Trump's policy been in place participants in many Muslim terrorist incidents would have been prevented from entering our country, for example the Ohio State University attack by Somali 'refugee' Abdul Razak Ali Artan, the September 2016 stabbing attack in a mall in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and two foiled bomb plots—one in Portland, Oregon, in 2010 and one in Columbus, Ohio, in 2000.

"Indeed, some 74 terrorist incidents have been attributed to Somali Muslims alone. And while the Obama administration did its best to cover-up the immigration status of the perpetrators we know that at least 13 of them were admitted to the U.S. as 'refugees.'

"Fourteen were legal permanent residents at the time of their radical activity, and 10 were naturalized citizens."

So it is quite disturbing.

And by the way, as a result of the Kentucky case where we had two refugees who had been brought in from Iraq, it was reported, in 2013, that in 2009, two al Qaeda Iraq terrorists were living as refugees in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Anyway, because of that discovery, the Obama State Department stopped processing Iraq refugees for 6 months in 2011.

So I do think it is important, as people keep screaming around here, what I believe as a Christian, Jesus said: The greatest commandment is to love God, and the second, he said, is to love each other. But he had also stated: Love thy neighbor as thy self.

And what some have not realized, if you don't like America, if you don't

like Americans, if you don't like our own country, and you don't love yourself, it is a bit hard to love your neighbor as yourself if you don't love yourself.

I think it is time Americans stood up and thanked God for—and/or thank whatever force they may be, some would say, or agnostic, whatever—just thank your lucky stars, but be thankful we have had the opportunities to live in the greatest country in the history of the world. And the only one who has truly given lives and treasure, not for imperialist sake but simply for freedom sake, for liberty sake, for people we didn't know, but we wanted them to share in freedom and liberty. That is a rare country. It has been a blessed and blessed country.

And I think it is important that if we are going to continue or get back to being that city on a hill, glowing that draws people to it, that would draw people to the Statue of Liberty, you have to be a nation of laws, you have to protect the people in the country, otherwise we go back to the Dark Ages, and we become a country that no one wants to come risk their lives to get to because there is nothing special.

□ 2100

We squandered our opportunities and refused to take up our responsibilities to protect this Nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for a friend like Mr. MATT GAETZ from Florida, as articulate and intelligent as he is, and I look forward to working with him and with the Speaker in the days ahead.

God has blessed America. Let's keep asking for God to bless America. If we ask, we are told: you will be given.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DESJARLAIS (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of attending his father's funeral.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and January 31 on account of family emergency.

Mr. DEFazio (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of illness.

#### PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE RULES

##### RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,

Washington, DC, January 30, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)(2) of House rule XI, I am submitting the rules of the Committee on the Budget for the 115th Congress. The rules were adopted during our Committee's organizational meeting on January 24, 2017.

Sincerely,

DIANE BLACK,  
Interim Chairman.

#### GENERAL APPLICABILITY

##### RULE 1—APPLICABILITY OF HOUSE RULES

(a) Except as otherwise specified herein, the Rules of the House of Representatives are the rules of the Committee so far as applicable, except that a motion to recess from day to day, or a motion to recess subject to the call of the Chair (within 24 hours), or a motion to dispense with the first reading (in full) of a bill or resolution, if printed copies are available, is a non-debatable motion of privilege in the Committee. A proposed investigative or oversight report shall be considered as read if it has been available to the members of the Committee for at least 24 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays except when the House is in session on such day).

(b) The Committee's rules shall be publicly available in electronic form and published in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the Chair of the Committee is elected in each odd-numbered year.

#### MEETINGS

##### RULE 2—REGULAR MEETINGS

(a) The regular meeting day of the Committee shall be the second Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m., while the House is in session, if notice is given pursuant to paragraph (c) and paragraph (g)(3) of clause 2(g)(3) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

(b) Regular meetings shall be canceled when they conflict with meetings of either party's caucus or conference.

(c) The Chair shall give written notice of the date, place, and subject matter of any Committee meeting, which may not commence earlier than the third day on which members have notice thereof, unless the Chair, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, or the Committee by majority vote with a quorum present for the transaction of business, determines there is good cause to begin the hearing sooner, in which case the Chair shall make the announcement at the earliest possible date. An announcement shall be published promptly in the Daily Digest and made publicly available in electronic form.

##### RULE 3—ADDITIONAL AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

(a) The Chair may call and convene additional meetings of the Committee as the Chair considers necessary or special meetings at the request of a majority of the members of the Committee in accordance with clause 2(c) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

(b) In the absence of exceptional circumstances, the Chair shall provide public electronic notice of additional meetings to the office of each member at least 24 hours in advance while Congress is in session, and at least three days in advance when Congress is not in session.

##### RULE 4—OPEN BUSINESS MEETINGS

(a) Meetings and hearings of the Committee shall be called to order and presided over by the Chair or, in the Chair's absence, by the member designated by the Chair as the Vice Chair of the Committee, or by the Ranking majority member of the Committee present as Acting Chair.

(b) Each meeting for the transaction of Committee business, including the markup of measures, shall be open to the public except when the Committee, in open session and with a quorum present, determines by roll call vote that all or part of the remainder of the meeting on that day shall be closed to the public in accordance with clause 2(g)(1) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

(c) No person, other than members of the Committee and such congressional staff and

departmental representatives as the Committee may authorize, shall be present at any business or markup session which has been closed to the public.

(d) Not later than 24 hours after commencing a meeting to consider a measure or matter, the Chair of the Committee shall cause the text of such measure or matter and any amendment adopted thereto to be made publicly available in electronic form.

#### RULE 5—QUORUMS

(a) A majority of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. No business shall be transacted and no measure or recommendation shall be reported unless a quorum is actually present.

#### RULE 6—RECOGNITION

(a) Any member, when recognized by the Chair, may address the Committee on any bill, motion, or other matter under consideration before the Committee. The time of such member shall be limited to 5 minutes until all members present have been afforded an opportunity to comment.

#### RULE 7—CONSIDERATION OF BUSINESS

(a) Measures or matters may be placed before the Committee, for its consideration, by the Chair or by a majority vote of the Committee members, a quorum being present.

#### RULE 8—AVAILABILITY OF LEGISLATION

(a) The Committee shall consider no bill, joint resolution, or concurrent resolution unless copies of the measure have been made available to all Committee members at least 24 hours prior to the time at which such measure is to be considered. When considering concurrent resolutions on the budget, this requirement shall be satisfied by making available copies of the complete Chairman's mark (or such material as will provide the basis for Committee consideration). The provisions of this rule may be suspended with the concurrence of the Chair and Ranking Minority Member.

(b) At least 24 hours prior to the commencement of a meeting for the markup of legislation, the Chair shall cause the text of such legislation to be made publicly available in electronic form.

#### RULE 9—PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET RESOLUTION

(a) It shall be the policy of the Committee that the starting point for any deliberations on a concurrent resolution on the budget should be the estimated or actual levels for the fiscal year preceding the budget year.

(b) In the consideration of a concurrent resolution on the budget, the Committee shall first proceed, unless otherwise determined by the Committee, to consider budget aggregates, functional categories, and other appropriate matters on a tentative basis, with the document before the Committee open to amendment. Subsequent amendments may be offered to aggregates, functional categories, or other appropriate matters, which have already been amended in their entirety.

(c) Following adoption of the aggregates, functional categories, and other matters, the text of a concurrent resolution on the budget incorporating such aggregates, functional categories, and other appropriate matters shall be considered for amendment and a final vote.

#### RULE 10—ROLL CALL VOTES

(a) A roll call of the members may be had upon the request of at least one-fifth of those present. In the apparent absence of a quorum, a roll call may be had on the request of any member.

(b) No vote may be conducted on any measure or motion pending before the Committee unless a quorum is present for such purpose.

(c) No vote by any member of the Committee on any measure or matter may be cast by proxy.